

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name(s):** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) within Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** NMFS - Sea Grant Joint Graduate Fellowship Program in Population Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics (Graduate Fellowship Program)
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Funding Opportunity Number:** GradFell 2004
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):** 11.417, Sea Grant Support
- **Dates:** Applications must be received by 5 p.m. (local time) on December 1, 2003 by a state Sea Grant Program [or by the National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) in the case of an institution of higher education in a non-Sea Grant state]. Applications are to be forwarded to the NSGO by the state Sea Grant Programs by 5 p.m. on December 8, 2003.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The Graduate Fellowship Program awards fellowships to approximately four new PhD students each year who are interested in careers related to either the population dynamics of living marine resources and the development and implementation of quantitative methods for assessing their status or the economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources. Fellows will work on thesis problems of public interest and relevance to NMFS and have summer internships at participating NMFS Science Centers or Laboratories under the guidance of NMFS mentors.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Description

The National Sea Grant Office (NSGO) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) established a new Graduate Fellowship Program in Population

Dynamics and Marine Resource Economics (Program) in 1999. The intent of the Program is to award fellowships to approximately four new students each year who are interested in careers related to 1) the population dynamics of living marine resources and the development and implementation of quantitative methods for assessing their status, and 2) the economics of the conservation and management of living marine resources. At least two new fellowships are to be awarded each year in each of the Program's two disciplines resulting in approximately six students per discipline to be supported annually when the Program is at its maximum level.

For the FY 2004 competition now being announced, funds are available to award four new fellowships in the two disciplines combined.

The goals of the Program are to 1) encourage qualified applicants to pursue careers in a) population dynamics and stock assessment methodology or b) marine resource economics; 2) increase available expertise related to a) the population dynamics and assessment of the status of the stocks of living marine resources or b) economic analysis of living marine resource conservation and management decisions; 3) foster closer relationships between academic scientists and NMFS; and 4) provide real-world experience to graduate students and accelerate their career development.

The fellowships will provide support for up to three years for highly qualified graduate students working towards a PhD in population dynamics or related fields of study and for up to two years for highly qualified graduate students working towards a PhD in marine resource economics, natural resource economics, or environmental economics. Continued support after the first year will be contingent upon the availability of Federal funds and satisfactory performance by the Fellow. In addition to his/her faculty adviser, each Fellow will be required to work closely with an expert (mentor) from NMFS who will provide data for the Fellow's thesis, serve on the Fellow's committee, and host an annual summer internship at the participating NMFS facility.

Mentors will be from participating NMFS Science Centers or Laboratories. Each Fellow will be required to work as a summer intern at the participating NMFS facility either on his/her thesis or on appropriate related problems. Remuneration for the summer internship will be part of the annual award. Population Dynamics Fellows will also be expected to spend 10-20 days at sea per year learning about sampling techniques and problems, commercial fishing, fishery biology, and local and regional issues of importance to fisheries management. Fellows may also work, as necessary, at the participating NMFS facility during some or all of the academic year at the mutual discretion of mentor, faculty adviser, and Fellow.

Newly-selected Fellows must submit a one-page description of their thesis research or assignment based on discussions involving mentor, faculty adviser, and Fellow to the Fellowship Program Manager by April 30, 2004. The thesis research or assignment description must reflect a clear mutual understanding of the substantive dimensions of the project and its expected results.

B. Program Authority

Authority for the Graduate Fellowship Program is provided by the following: 33 U.S.C. 1127(a).

II. Award Information

The award for each Fellowship, contingent upon the availability of Federal funds, will be a multi-year cooperative agreement in the amount of \$38,000 per year. The award will be a cooperative agreement because of substantial involvement by NMFS. This involvement includes the Fellow working each summer on his/her thesis research or related activity at a participating NMFS facility and serving for 10-20 days aboard a research or commercial vessel during a scientific survey or experimental activity. The Fellow's work will be overseen by a NMFS mentor who will provide advice and guidance. The portion of the award provided to each Fellow for salary (stipend), living expenses (per diem), tuition (unless waived), health insurance and other institution fees, and travel necessary to carry out the proposed thesis research and to attend the Annual Graduate Fellows Seminar each spring will be determined and distributed by the institution in accordance with its guidelines.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Prospective Fellows must be United States citizens. At the time of application, prospective Population Dynamics Fellows must be admitted to a PhD degree program in population dynamics or a related field such as applied mathematics, statistics, or quantitative ecology at an institution of higher education in the United States or its territories, or submit a signed letter from the institution indicating provisional acceptance to a PhD degree program conditional on obtaining financial support such as this fellowship. At the time of application, prospective Marine Resource Economics Fellows must be in the process of completing at least two years of course work in a PhD degree program in natural resource economics or a related field at an institution of higher education in the United States or its territories. Applications must be submitted by the institution of higher education, which may be any such institution in the United States or its territories.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Of the \$38,000 award, 50 percent (\$19,000) will be contributed by NMFS, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ percent (\$12,667) by the NSGO, and 16 $\frac{2}{3}$ percent (\$6,333) by the institution of higher education as the required 50 percent match of NSGO funds.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications must adhere to the provisions under "Applications" and the nine requirements under "Required Elements" by the deadline of December 1, 2003. Failure

to follow these restrictions may result in applications being rejected without review.

1. Applications

The original and five (5) copies of the application must be submitted. The number of pages in the application must be in accordance with the page limitations specified for certain of the requirements under "Required Elements" (i.e., project abstract, curriculum vitae, and education and career goal statement). All printed pages in the application must be on 8.5" x 11" paper with at least a 10-point font.

2. Required Elements

Applications must include the following nine elements:

a. Signed title page: The title page must identify the prospective Fellow, be signed by the faculty advisor and the institutional representative, and provide complete contact information. The program area being addressed should be clearly identified by starting the project title with "NMFS - Sea Grant Graduate Fellowship". The total amount of Federal and matching funds being requested for each project year must be listed.

b. Project summary: The project summary should concisely describe the activity being proposed and the impact that would result from its successful completion, in a form suitable for publication. Applicants are encouraged to use the Sea Grant Project Summary Form 90-2, but may use their own form as long as it provides the same information as the Sea Grant form. The project summary should include: i. Title: Use the exact title as it appears in the rest of the application. ii. Investigators: List the names and affiliations of each investigator who will significantly contribute to the project, starting with the Principal Investigator. For Sea Grant Fellowships, the faculty advisor or the state Sea Grant Director may be used. iii. Funding request for each year of the Fellowship, including matching funds if appropriate. iv. Project period: Start and completion dates. Applications should request a start date of June 1, 2004, v. Project abstract: This should include the rationale for the proposed activity, the scientific or technical objectives and/or hypotheses to be tested, and a brief summary of the work to be completed. The project abstract (summary of the proposed thesis or the general intended area of study) should not exceed three (3) pages.

c. Budget and budget justification: There should be a separate budget for each year as well as a cumulative annual budget for the entire period of the proposed fellowship. The Sea Grant Budget Form 90-4 should preferably be used, but the institution may use its own form as long as it provides the same information as the Sea Grant form. Sub-contractors, if any, should have a separate budget page. Indirect costs are not allowable for either the fellowship or for any costs associated with the fellowship [15 CFR 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships"].

Matching funds equivalent to 50 percent of the NSGO funds must be provided by the Fellow's institution. Allocation of matching funds must be specified in the budget and may consist of up to one-half month's salary for the faculty adviser, waived tuition, equipment and supplies, and any other costs typically used as matching funds. In

addition to stipend and tuition for the applicant, the budget should include funds for equipment, supplies, and travel (see "Award Information" above).

d. Curriculum vitae of the student, the faculty advisor, and the NMFS mentor (2-page maximum per investigator).

e. Signed letter of commitment from the prospective NMFS mentor.

f. Official copies of all undergraduate and graduate student transcripts.

g. Education and career goal statement [not to exceed two (2) pages] from the student indicating the number of years for which fellowship support is being sought and the student's interest in a) marine population dynamics or the development and implementation of quantitative methods for assessing stock status of living marine resources, or b) in marine resource economics.

h. Three signed letters of recommendation, including one from the student's faculty adviser.

i. Proof of application, acceptance, provisional acceptance, and enrollment (only for Population Dynamics applicants) in the case of students entering graduate school (i.e., who have not yet completed one semester of graduate work) if they are selected for a fellowship.

B. Submission Dates and Times

December 1, 2003, 5 pm (local time) - Applications due at state Sea Grant Program or at NSGO (only if application is from an institution of higher education in a non-Sea Grant state).

December 8, 2003, 5 pm EST - Applications due at NSGO from state Sea Grant Programs.

Applications will be stamped with the date received at the state Sea Grant Program or at the NSGO. Applications arriving after the above deadlines will be accepted for review only if the applicant can document that the application was provided to a delivery service that guaranteed delivery prior to the specified closing date and time. In any event, applications received by the NSGO or the state Sea Grant Programs later than two business days following the closing date will not be accepted.

C. Address to Request Application Package

Application packages may be obtained from Sea Grant College Program Directors. The addresses of the Sea Grant College Program Directors may be found on Sea Grant's World Wide Web home page (<http://www.nsgo.seagrant.org/SGDirectors.html>) or may also be obtained by contacting Mr. Joseph Brown at the NSGO (tel: 301-713-2438 x135 or e-mail: joe.brown@noaa.gov). Application packages may also be obtained directly from the NSGO by contacting Mr. Brown.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372,

“Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.”

E. Funding Restrictions

Indirect costs are not allowable for either the fellowship or for any costs associated with the fellowship [15 CFR 917.11(e), "Guidelines for Sea Grant Fellowships"].

F. Other Submission Requirements

Applications from institutions of higher education in Sea Grant states must be submitted to the state Sea Grant Program. The addresses of the state Sea Grant College Programs may be found at the following Internet website: (<http://www.nsgo.seagrant.org/SGDirectors.html>) or may also be obtained by contacting Mr. Joseph Brown at the NSGO [mail address: National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910; tel: (301) 713-2438 ext. 135; or e-mail: joe.brown@noaa.gov]. Applications from elsewhere may be submitted either to the nearest state Sea Grant Program or directly to the NSGO. Applications submitted to the NSGO should be addressed to: National Sea Grant Office, R/SG, Attn: Mrs. Geraldine Taylor, Proposal Processing, Room 11732, NOAA, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (telephone number for express mail applications is 301-713-2445). All applications must be hard copy only. Facsimile transmissions and electronic mail submission of applications will not be accepted.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria and weighting of the criteria are as follows:

1. Academic record (particularly in the quantitative area) and statement of career goals and objectives (40 percent).
2. Quality of previous research and applicability to program priorities (25 percent).
3. Recommendations/endorsements (20 percent), including expertise of major professor and proposed NMFS mentor.
4. Additional relevant experience (e.g., diversity of education; extra-curricular activities; honors and awards; interpersonal, written, and oral communications skills) (15 percent).
5. Financial need (0 percent).

B. Review and Selection Process

An initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. Applications within each of the two

disciplines (i.e., population dynamics and marine resource economics) will be individually ranked in accordance with the above criteria and their assigned weights by independent review panels (one panel for each discipline) consisting of government and academic experts. Panel members will provide individual evaluations of each applicant, and their ratings will be used to produce a rank order of the applications within each discipline. The selecting official shall award in the rank order within each discipline unless the application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one of the selection factors provided below. The selecting official shall make final recommendations for award to the Grants officer who is authorized to obligate the funds and execute the award.

C. Selection Factors

The Selecting Official shall award in the rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based on the following factors:

1. Balance of academic disciplines, institutions, and geography (e.g., give priority to NMFS Fisheries Science Centers that may not currently have any Graduate Fellows).
2. Availability of funds.
3. Program-specific objectives (see Section I.A. Program Description).
4. Degree type/level sought (Scientific area of degree).
5. Statement of intent.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, review of applications will occur during February 2004, and funds are expected to be awarded by approximately June 1, 2004, the start date that should be used on the Application for Federal Assistance (Form 424) for successful applications.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The notice of award is signed by the NOAA Grants Officer and is the authorizing document. It is provided by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization.

The NSGO will notify each unsuccessful applicant by informing the state Sea Grant Program through which the application was submitted in writing, via e-mail, and by providing a written summary, via e-mail, of the comments given by the review panel. The state Sea Grant Programs will, in turn, formally notify each unsuccessful applicant and forward the summary comments provided by the NSGO. The applications that are not ultimately selected for funding will be destroyed.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Administrative and national policy requirements for all Department of Commerce awards are contained in the Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements published in the Federal Register on October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the Federal Register notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109). You may obtain a copy of these by notices by contacting the agency contact(s) under Section VII, or by going to the website at: www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/aces140.html.

C. Reporting

All financial and progress reports shall be submitted in triplicate (one original and two copies). Financial reports are to be submitted to the NOAA Grants Officer and performance reports (summary of accomplishments and activities) are to be submitted to the NOAA Fellowship Program Manager. Fellows will be expected to present a review of the progress on their research during the Annual Graduate Fellows Seminar held each spring. Financial reports are semi-annual and performance reports are annual.

VII. Agency Contact(s)

Contact Dr. Emory D. Anderson, National Sea Grant College Program, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910; tel: (301) 713-2435 ext. 144; e-mail: emory.anderson@noaa.gov.

VIII. Other Information

Sea Grant Program information collection and reporting requirements in this notice are authorized by the Office of Management and Budget under Control No. 0648-0362.